



Congressman Bud Cramer

September 2005 E-Newsletter

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I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and aid our community has given Hurricane victims in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina. I am proud that our community has hosted fundraisers, food and clothing drives, job fairs, picnics, and other events organized to help victims begin to rebuild their lives. I would like to commend the countless number of schools, hospitals, churches, synagogues, business, and other organizations and individuals from across North Alabama who have given all they can to help hurricane victims. I thank all of them for their continued efforts and encourage them to continue their support. As a reference for those in North Alabama who want to help, I have compiled a list of phone numbers and websites for relief and assistance programs across the state and nation. The list can be found on my website at <http://cramer.house.gov>.

Bud Cramer

Hurricane Relief Efforts

Representative Cramer announced this month the approval of a number of pieces of legislation aimed at aiding relief efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Cramer said, "I'm pleased that the House has pledged its support to provide aid and assistance to victims of these Hurricanes, which allows them to focus their efforts on returning home and rebuilding their lives."

Among the legislation approved were two Emergency Appropriations bills that provided a total of \$62.3 billion for federal, state, and local relief efforts. Cramer, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, will play an active role in ensuring continued funding for Hurricane relief efforts. The funding was in addition to legislation that made adjustments to ongoing assistance programs that help those affected by Hurricane Katrina continue to receive vital benefits and other financial aid.

This included legislation that facilitated aid to Hurricane victims through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. It specifically makes available additional TANF funds for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Additionally, the House approved legislation to waive the repayment requirements for Pell Grant recipients and any federal student grant provided to students if their school attendance is interrupted because of Hurricane Katrina.

Cramer also announced passage of the Hurricane Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act, which included provisions that prevents the loss of certain credits and deductions as well as provisions that waive penalties for tapping into retirement savings. The legislation also provides a \$500-per-person credit for housing victims of the storm and includes incentives to encourage charitable donations. Businesses are also provided tax incentives to retain employees on their payrolls, despite being inoperable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://CRAMER.HOUSE.GOV](http://Cramer.house.gov)



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Washington Update

This month, Representative Cramer announced that the U.S. Department of Justice has named the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) in Huntsville as the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center (SRCAC). As the SRCAC, the Justice Department will award the NCAC with \$698,564 a year for five years to provide information, consultation, and training to Children's Advocacy Centers in seventeen states.

Cramer also announced this month, House approval of the Children's Safety Act of 2005. Cramer, an original cosponsor of this bill, said the House-passed legislation will increase and tighten supervision of sex offenders and will enhance uniform notification standards for tracking predators. Earlier this year, Cramer and Representative Mark Foley (R-Fla.) introduced the Sex Offenders Registration and Notification Act. The Cramer-Foley bill would strengthen the ability of federal law enforcement to track convicted sex offenders and improve the ways neighborhoods and school districts are notified about convicted sex offenders. Title 1 of the Children's Safety Act of 2005 includes language from Cramer and Foley's bill.

Representative Cramer also announced that the House voted this month to strengthen the U.S. Department of Commerce's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program. The MEP program is a nationwide network of nonprofit centers that provide technical assistance to small- and mid-sized manufacturers. The State of Alabama participates in the MEP program through the Alabama Technology Network (ATN). There are 10 ATN centers across the state, including centers in Tuscumbia and Huntsville. "The MEP program is a proven program with a remarkable record of assistance for American manufacturers, and this bill will strengthen it for the future," said Cramer.

District Update

Earlier this month, Representative Cramer met with first responders from across North Alabama to discuss the relief efforts going on as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Many of these first responders went to the gulf coast region to personally aid in relief efforts. Cramer said, "I wanted to meet with these first responders to learn their first hand account of the situation in the devastated area and more about what they have done to aid relief efforts. Their assessment of how operations are working will help me as Congress decides on how to continue dealing with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as future disasters."

Cramer addressed Marshall Space Flight Center employees during an "All-Hands" briefing this month. Cramer joined Marshall Center Director Dave King to announce additional details and celebrate Marshall's new roles and responsibilities in NASA's Space Exploration Vision. Marshall will lead NASA efforts on the Crew Launch Vehicle (CLV) and the Heavy Lift Launch Vehicle (HLLV). "These critical responsibilities reaffirm what we already knew and have strongly advocated to NASA Headquarters -- Marshall's unique capabilities are vital to NASA's exploration plans," said Cramer.

Also this month, Representative Bud Cramer joined officials from J.F. Drake State Technical College to officially open the S.C. O'Neal Sr. Library and Technology Center. In the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, Representative Cramer used his position on the Appropriations Committee to help secure \$1.1 million for the construction of this center.